

**Study
Guide**

NAME _____
CLASS _____ DATE _____ SCORE _____

Benjamin Franklin (1706–1790)

from THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY, *from* POOR RICHARD'S ALMANACK, and A
PRINTER'S EPITAPH (Pages 74–88)

Understanding the Writer and His Background

1. Explain why Franklin is described as “the First American.”

2. Despite Franklin's enormous achievements, he still had critics. In your own words, describe two criticisms of Franklin.

Understanding the Selection

3. Below are three incidents in Franklin's early life. Briefly explain the significance of each incident.

- a. He wrote his first newspaper article.

- b. He left Boston for New York.

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NAME _____

CLASS _____ DATE _____

STUDY GUIDE—CONTINUED

c. He left New York for Philadelphia.

4. Briefly describe how Franklin intended to achieve moral perfection.

5. Explain Franklin's reasoning for putting Temperance first, Silence second, and Order third in his list of virtues.

Understanding Vocabulary

6. Find each of the following words in the excerpt from Franklin's *Autobiography*. Determine the word's meaning by the way it is used in the sentence and then check the meaning given in the glossary. Use each word in a sentence that reveals its meaning.

approbation _____

arduous _____

facilitate _____

eradicate _____

incorrigible _____

FROM
The Autobiography



My brother had, in 1720 or '21, begun to print a newspaper. It was the second that appeared in America, and was called the *New England Courant*. The only one before it was the *Boston News-Letter*. I remember his being dissuaded by some of his friends from the undertaking, as not likely to succeed, one newspaper being, in their judgment, enough for America. At this time (1771) there are not less than five-and-twenty. He went on, however, with the undertaking, and after having worked in composing the types and printing off the sheets, I was employed to carry the papers through the streets to the customers. He had some ingenious men among his friends who amused themselves by writing little pieces for this paper, which gained it credit, and made it more in demand; and these gentlemen often visited us. Hearing their conversations, and their accounts of the approbation their papers were received with, I was excited to try my hand among them. But being still a boy, and suspecting that my brother would object to printing anything of mine in his paper if he knew it to be mine, I contrived to disguise my hand, and writing an anonymous paper, I put it in at night under the door of the printing house. It was found in the morning and communicated to his writing friends when they called in as usual. They read it, commented on it in my hearing, and I had the exquisite pleasure of finding it met with their approbation, and that, in their different guesses at the author, none were named but men of some character among us for learning and ingenuity.

I suppose now that I was rather lucky in my judges, and that perhaps they were not really so very good ones as I then esteemed them. Encouraged, however, by this, I wrote and conveyed in the same way to the press several more papers, which were equally approved, and I kept my secret till my small fund of sense for such performances was pretty well exhausted, and then I discovered it; when I began to be considered a little more by my brother's acquaintance, and in a manner that did not quite please him, as he thought, probably with reason, that it tended to make me too vain. And perhaps this might be one occasion of the differences that we frequently had about this time. Though a brother, he considered himself as my master, and me as his apprentice, and accordingly expected the same services from me as he would from another; while I thought he demeaned me too much in some he required of me, who from a brother expected more indulgence. Our disputes were often brought before our father, and I fancy I was either generally in the right, or else a better pleader, because the judgment was generally in my favor. But my brother was passionate, and had often beaten me, which I took extremely amiss; and, thinking my apprenticeship very tedious, I was continually wishing for some opportunity of shortening it, which at length offered in a manner unexpected.

One of the pieces in our newspaper, on some political point which I have now forgotten, gave offense to the Assembly. He was taken up, censured, and imprisoned for a month by the Speaker's warrant, I suppose because he



Vendors Display Wares at Third and Market Streets (1799). Hand-colored engraving by William Birch.

John Carter Brown Library at Brown University

6 would not discover his author. I too was taken up and examined before the council; but, though I did not give them any satisfaction, they contented themselves with admonishing me, and dismissed me, considering me, perhaps, as an apprentice who was bound to keep his master's secrets. During my brother's confinement, which I resented a good deal, notwithstanding our private differences, I had the management of the paper; and I made bold to give our rulers some rubs in it, which my brother took very kindly, while others began to consider me in an unfavorable light, as a young genius that had a turn for libeling and satire. My brother's discharge was accompa-

nied with an order of the House (a very odd one) that *James Franklin should no longer print the paper called the New England Courant*. There was a consultation held in our printing house among his friends what he should do in this case. Some proposed to evade the order by changing the name of the paper; but my brother seeing inconveniences in that, it was finally concluded on as a better way to let it be printed for the future under the name of *Benjamin Franklin*. And to avoid the censure of the Assembly that might fall on him as still printing it by his apprentice, the contrivance was 8 that my old indenture should be returned to me, with a full discharge on the back of it, to

be shown on occasion; but to secure to him the benefit of my service, I was to sign new indentures for the remainder of the term, which were to be kept private. A very flimsy scheme 11 it was, but however it was immediately executed, and the paper went on accordingly under my name for several months. At length, a fresh difference arising between my brother and me, I took upon me to assert my freedom, presuming that he would not venture to produce the new indentures. It was not fair in me to take this advantage, and this I therefore reckon one of the first errata¹ of my life. But the unfairness of it weighed little with me when under the impressions of resentment for the blows his passion too often urged him to bestow upon me, though he was otherwise not 9 an ill-natured man. Perhaps I was too saucy² and provoking.

10 When he found I would leave him, he took care to prevent my getting employment in any other printing house of the town, by going round and speaking to every master, who accordingly refused to give me work. I then 12 thought of going to New York, as the nearest place where there was a printer; and I was rather inclined to leave Boston when I reflected that I had already made myself a little obnoxious to the governing party; and, from the arbitrary proceedings of the Assembly in my brother's case, it was likely I might, if I stayed, soon bring myself into scrapes. . . .

A friend arranges for Franklin's passage on a New York sloop.

So I sold some of my books to raise a little money, was taken on board privately, and as we had a fair wind, in three days I found myself in New York, near three hundred miles from home, a boy of but seventeen, without the least recommendation to, or knowledge of, any person in the place, and with very little money in my pocket.

My inclinations for the sea were by this time

1. errata (i-rä'ta): errors.
2. saucy: here, impudent.

worn out, or I might now have gratified them. But, having a trade, and supposing myself a pretty good workman, I offered my service to the printer in the place, old Mr. William Bradford (who had been the first printer in Pennsylvania, but removed from thence upon the quarrel of George Keith). He could give me no employment, having little to do and help enough already; but, says he, "My son at Philadelphia has lately lost his principal hand, Aquila Rose, by death; if you go thither, I believe he may employ you." Philadelphia was one hundred miles farther. I set out, however, in a boat for Amboy,³ leaving my chest and things to follow me round by sea. In crossing the bay, we met with a squall that tore our rotten sails to pieces, prevented our getting into the kill,⁴ and drove us upon Long Island. . . .

One of the passengers, a Dutchman, falls overboard, and Franklin rescues him.

When we drew near the island, we found it was at a place where there could be no landing, there being a great surf on the stony beach. So we dropped anchor and swung round towards the shore. Some people came down to the water edge and halloed⁵ to us, as we did to them. But the wind was so high, and the surf so loud, that we could not hear so as to understand each other. There were canoes on the shore, and we made signs and halloed that they should fetch us, but they either did not understand us, or thought it impracticable. So they went away, and night coming on, we had no remedy but to wait till the wind should abate; and in the meantime the boatman and I concluded to sleep if we could, and so crowded into the scuttle⁶ with the Dutchman who was still wet, and the spray, beating over the head of our boat, leaked through to us so that we were soon almost as wet as he. In this

3. Amboy: a town on the New Jersey coast.
4. kill: creek or stream.
5. halloed: called.
6. scuttle: opening or hatchway.

manner, we lay all night with very little rest. But, the wind abating the next day, we made a shift to reach Amboy before night, having been thirty hours on the water, without victuals or any drink but a bottle of filthy rum, the water we sailed on being salt.

In the evening I found myself very feverish, and went into bed. But, having read somewhere that cold water drunk plentifully was good for a fever, I followed the prescription, sweat plentifully most of the night, my fever left me, and in the morning, crossing the ferry, I proceeded on my journey on foot, having 15 fifty miles to Burlington, where I was told I should find boats that would carry me the rest of the way to Philadelphia.

It rained very hard all the day; I was thoroughly soaked, and by noon a good deal tired; so I stopped at a poor inn where I stayed all night, beginning now to wish I had never left home. I cut so miserable a figure, too, that I 16 found, by the questions asked me, I was suspected to be some runaway servant, and in danger of being taken up on that suspicion. However, I proceeded the next day and got in the evening to an inn, within eight or ten miles of Burlington, kept by one Dr. Brown. . . .

At his house I lay that night, and the next morning reached Burlington, but had the mortification to find that the regular boats were gone a little before my coming and no other expected to go till Tuesday, this being Saturday; wherefore I returned to an old woman in the town of whom I had bought 17 gingerbread to eat on the water, and asked her advice. She invited me to lodge at her house till a passage by water should offer; and being tired with my foot traveling, I accepted the invitation. She, understanding I was a printer, would have had me stay at that town and follow my business, being ignorant of the stock necessary to begin with. She was very hospitable, gave me a dinner of oxcheek with great good will, accepting only a pot of ale in return; and I thought myself fixed till Tuesday should come. However, walking in the evening by the side of the river, a boat came by, which I found

was going towards Philadelphia with several people in her. They took me in, and as there was no wind, we rowed all the way; and about midnight, not having yet seen the city, some of the company were confident we must have passed it, and would row no farther; the others knew not where we were; so we put towards the shore, got into a creek, landed near an old fence, with the rails of which we made a fire, the night being cold in October, and there we remained till daylight. Then one of the company knew the place to be Cooper's Creek, a little above Philadelphia, which we saw as soon as we got out of the creek, and arrived there about eight or nine o'clock on the Sunday morning, and landed at the Market Street wharf.

I have been the more particular in this description of my journey, and shall be so of my first entry into that city, that you may in your mind compare such unlikely beginnings with the figure I have since made there. I was in my working dress, my best clothes being to come round by sea. I was dirty from my journey; my pockets were stuffed out with shirts and stockings; I knew no soul nor where to look for lodging. I was fatigued with traveling, rowing, and want of rest. I was very hungry, and my whole stock of cash consisted of a Dutch dollar and about a shilling in copper. The latter I gave the people of the boat for my passage, who at first refused it, on account of my rowing; but I insisted on their taking it, a man being sometimes more generous when he has but a little money than when he has plenty, perhaps through fear of being thought to have but little. <

Then I walked up the street, gazing about, till near the markethouse I met a boy with bread. I had made many a meal on bread, and, inquiring where he got it, I went immediately to the baker's he directed me to, in Second Street, and asked for biscuit, intending such as we had in Boston; but they, it seems, were not made in Philadelphia. Then I asked for a threepenny loaf, and was told they had none such. So, not considering or knowing the dif-

ference of money, and the greater cheapness nor the names of his bread, I bade him give me threepenny worth of any sort. He gave me, accordingly, three great puffy rolls. I was surprised at the quantity, but took it, and, having no room in my pockets, walked off with a roll under each arm and eating the other. Thus I went up Market Street as far as Fourth Street, passing by the door of Mr. Read, my future wife's father; when she, standing at the door, saw me, and thought I made, as I certainly

18 did, a most awkward, ridiculous appearance. Then I turned and went down Chestnut Street and part of Walnut Street, eating my roll all the way, and, coming round, found myself again at Market Street wharf, near the boat I came in, to which I went for a draft of the river water; and, being filled with one of my
19 rolls, gave the other two to a woman and her child that came down the river in the boat with us, and were waiting to go farther. Thus refreshed, I walked again up the street, which by this time had many clean-dressed people in it, who were all walking the same way. I joined them, and thereby was led into the great meetinghouse of the Quakers near the market. I sat down among them, and, after looking round awhile and hearing nothing said, being very drowsy through labor and want of rest the preceding night, I fell fast asleep, and continued so till the meeting broke up, when one was kind enough to rouse me. This was, therefore, the first house I was in, or slept in, in Philadelphia.

The following selection from the Autobiography tells what happened six or seven years later, after Franklin had established himself as a Philadelphia businessman.

20 It was about this time that I conceived the bold and arduous project of arriving at moral
21 perfection. I wished to live without committing any fault at any time; I would conquer all that either natural inclination, custom, or company might lead me into. As I knew, or thought I knew, what was right and wrong, I did not see why I might not *always* do the one and avoid

the other. But I soon found I had undertaken a task of more difficulty than I had imagined. While my attention was taken up in guarding against one fault, I was often surprised by another. Habit took the advantage of inattention. Inclination was sometimes too strong for reason. I concluded, at length, that the mere speculative conviction that it was our interest to be completely virtuous was not sufficient to prevent our slipping, and that the contrary habits must be broken, and good ones acquired and established, before we can have any dependence on a steady, uniform rectitude of conduct. For this purpose I therefore contrived
22 the following method.

In the various enumerations of the moral virtues I had met with in my reading, I found that catalog more or less numerous, as different writers included more or fewer ideas under the same name. Temperance, for example, was by some confined to eating and drinking, while by others it was extended to mean the moderating every other pleasure, appetite, inclination, or passion, bodily or mental, even to our avarice and ambition. I proposed to myself, for the sake of clearness, to use rather more names, with fewer ideas annexed to each, than a few names with more ideas; and I included under thirteen names of virtues all that at that time occurred to me as necessary or desirable, and annexed to each a short precept, which fully expressed the extent I gave to its meaning.

These names of virtues, with their precepts, were:

- 23 1. TEMPERANCE. Eat not to dullness. Drink not to elevation.
2. SILENCE. Speak not but what may benefit others or yourself. Avoid trifling conversation.
3. ORDER. Let all your things have their places. Let each part of your business have its time.
4. RESOLUTION. Resolve to perform what you ought. Perform without fail what you resolve.

5. FRUGALITY. Make no expense but to do good to others or yourself: i.e., waste nothing.

6. INDUSTRY. Lose no time. Be always employed in something useful. Cut off all unnecessary actions.

7. SINCERITY. Use no hurtful deceit. Think innocently and justly; and, if you speak, speak accordingly.

8. JUSTICE. Wrong none by doing injuries, or omitting the benefits that are your duty.

9. MODERATION. Avoid extremes. Forbear resenting injuries so much as you think they deserve.

10. CLEANLINESS. Tolerate no uncleanness in body, clothes, or habitation.

11. TRANQUILITY. Be not disturbed at trifles, or at accidents common or unavoidable.

12. CHASTITY. Rarely use venery but for health or offspring; never to dullness, weakness, or the injury of your own or another's peace or reputation.

13. HUMILITY. Imitate Jesus and Socrates.

My intention being to acquire the habitude of all these virtues, I judged it would be well not to distract my attention by attempting the whole at once but to fix it on one of them at a time; and, when I should be master of that, then to proceed to another, and so on till I should have gone through the thirteen. And as the previous acquisition of some might facilitate the acquisition of certain others, I arranged them with that view as they stand above. *Temperance* first, as it tends to procure that coolness and clearness of head which is so necessary where constant vigilance was to be kept up, and guard maintained against the unremitting attraction of ancient habits and the force of perpetual temptations. This being acquired and established, *Silence* would be more easy; and my desire being to gain knowledge at the same time that I improved in virtue, and considering that in conversation it was obtained rather by the use of the ears than of the tongue, and therefore wishing to break a habit I was getting into of prattling, punning, and joking, which only made me acceptable to

trifling company, I gave *Silence* the second place. This and the next, *Order*, I expected would allow me more time for attending to my project and my studies. *Resolution*, once become habitual, would keep me firm in my endeavors to obtain all the subsequent virtues; *Frugality* and *Industry*, by freeing me from my remaining debt, and producing affluence and independence, would make more easy the practice of *Sincerity* and *Justice*, etc., etc. Conceiving then, that, agreeable to the advice of Pythagoras⁷ in his Golden Verses, daily examination would be necessary, I contrived the following method for conducting that examination.

I made a little book, in which I allotted a page for each of the virtues. I ruled each page with red ink, so as to have seven columns, one for each day of the week, marking each column with a letter for the day. I crossed these columns with thirteen red lines, marking the beginning of each line with the first letter of one of the virtues, on which line and in its proper column I might mark, by a little black spot, every fault I found upon examination to have been committed respecting that virtue upon that day.

I determined to give a week's strict attention to each of the virtues successively. Thus, in the first week, my great guard was to avoid even the least offense against *Temperance*, leaving the other virtues to their ordinary chance, only marking every evening the faults of the day. Thus, if in the first week I could keep my first line, marked T, clear of spots, I supposed the habit of that virtue so much strengthened, and its opposite weakened, that I might venture extending my attention to include the next, and for the following week keep both lines clear of spots. Proceeding thus to the last, I could go through a course complete in thirteen weeks, and four courses in a year. And like him who, having a garden to weed, does not attempt to eradicate all the bad herbs at once,

7. Pythagoras (pī-thāg'ar-as): a famous Greek philosopher and mathematician of the sixth century B.C.

which would exceed his reach and his strength, but works on one of the beds at a time, and, having accomplished the first, proceeds to a second; so I should have (I hoped) the encouraging pleasure of seeing on my pages the progress I made in virtue, by clearing successively my lines of their spots, till in the end, by a number of courses, I should be happy in viewing a clean book, after a thirteen weeks' daily examination. . . .

The precept of *Order* requiring that every part of my business should have its allotted time, one page in my little book contained the following scheme of employment for the twenty-four hours of a natural day.

The Morning Question, What good shall I do this day?	5	Rise, wash, and address <i>Powerful goodness</i> ; contrive day's business and take the resolution of the day; prosecute ⁸ the present study; and breakfast.
	6	
	7	
	8	
	9	
	10	Work.
	11	
	12	
	1	Read, or overlook my accounts, and dine.
	2	
	3	
	4	Work.
	5	
	6	
	7	Put things in their places, supper, music, or diversion, or conversation, examination of the day.
	8	
	9	
Evening Question, What good have I done today?	10	Sleep.
	11	
	12	
	1	
	2	
	3	
	4	

8. prosecute: carry on.

I entered upon the execution of this plan for self-examination, and continued it with occasional intermissions for some time. I was surprised to find myself so much fuller of faults than I had imagined, but I had the satisfaction of seeing them diminish. To avoid the trouble of renewing now and then my little book, which, by scraping out the marks on the paper of old faults to make room for new ones in a new course, became full of holes, I transferred my tables and precepts to the ivory leaves of a memorandum book, on which the lines were drawn with red ink that made a durable stain, and on those lines I marked my faults with a black-lead pencil, which marks I could easily wipe out with a wet sponge. After a while I went through one course only in a year and afterward only one in several years, till at length I omitted them entirely, being employed in voyages and business abroad, with a multiplicity of affairs that interfered; but I always carried my little book with me.

My scheme of *Order* gave me the most trouble; and I found that, though it might be practicable where a man's business was such as to leave him the disposition⁹ of his time, that of a journeyman printer, for instance, it was not possible to be exactly observed by a master, who must mix with the world and often receive people of business at their own hours. *Order*, too, with regard to places for things, papers, etc., I found extremely difficult to acquire. I had not been early accustomed to *Method*, and, having an exceeding good memory, I was not so sensible of the inconvenience attending want of method. This article, therefore, cost me so much painful attention, and my faults in it vexed me so much, and I made so little progress in amendment, and had such frequent relapses, that I was almost ready to give up the attempt, and content myself with a faulty character in that respect, like the man who, in buying an ax of a smith, my neighbor, desired to have the whole of its surface as bright as the edge. The smith consented to

9. disposition: here, management.

grind it bright for him if he would turn the wheel; he turned, while the smith pressed the broad face of the ax hard and heavily on the stone, which made the turning of it very fatiguing. The man came every now and then from the wheel to see how the work went on, and at length would take his ax as it was, without further grinding. "No," says the smith, "turn on, turn on; we shall have it bright by and by; as yet, 'tis only speckled." "Yes," says the man, "but—I think I like a speckled ax best." And I believe this may have been the case with many who, having, for want of some such means as I employed, found the difficulty of obtaining good and breaking bad habits in other points of vice and virtue, have given up the struggle, and concluded that a *speckled ax was best*. For something, that pretended to be reason, was every now and then suggesting to me that such extreme nicety as I exacted of myself might be a kind of foppery¹⁰ in morals, which, if it were known, would make me ridiculous; that a perfect character might be attended with the inconvenience of being envied and hated; and that a benevolent man should allow a few faults in himself, to keep his friends in countenance.

In truth, I found myself incorrigible with respect to *Order*; and now I am grown old, and my memory bad, I feel very sensibly the want of it. But, on the whole, though I never arrived at the perfection I had been so ambitious of obtaining, but fell far short of it, yet I was, by the endeavor, a better and a happier man than I otherwise should have been if I had not attempted it; as those who aim at perfect writing by imitating the engraved copies, though they never reach the wished-for excellence of those copies, their hand is mended by the endeavor, and is tolerable while it continues fair and legible.

10. foppery (fōp'ə-rē): foolishness.

And it may be well my posterity should be informed that to this little *artifice*, with the blessing of God, their ancestor owed the constant *felicity* of his life, down to his seventy-ninth year, in which this is written. What reverses may attend the remainder is in the hand of Providence; but, if they arrive, the reflection on past happiness enjoyed ought to help his bearing them with more resignation. To *Temperance* he ascribes his long-continued health, and what is still left to him of a good constitution. To *Industry* and *Frugality*, the early easiness of his circumstances and acquisition of his fortune, with all that knowledge that enabled him to be a useful citizen, and obtained for him some degree of reputation among the learned. To *Sincerity* and *Justice*, the confidence of his country, and the honorable employs it conferred upon him. And to the joint influence of the whole mass of the virtues, even in the imperfect state he was able to acquire them, all that evenness of temper, and that cheerfulness in conversation, which makes his company still sought for, and agreeable even to his younger acquaintance. I hope, therefore, that some of my descendants may follow the example and reap the benefit.



Reading Check

- ① 1. Why did Franklin submit his articles to his brother's newspaper anonymously?
- ② 2. Why was Franklin's brother imprisoned by the Assembly?
3. What caused Franklin to continue his journey from New York to Philadelphia?
- ③ 4. Which of his list of virtues gave Franklin the most trouble?
5. What is the point of the story about the speckled ax?

Analyzing Literature Worksheet

Understanding an Autobiography

Because an autobiography is a person's account of his or her own life, it is usually subjective. However, an autobiography offers insights into the author's attitudes, thoughts and feelings.

In his autobiography, Benjamin Franklin gives his reasons for several important decisions in his life. Write a brief explanation of Franklin's motivation for each decision.

1. Franklin submits his first writings to the *New England Courant* anonymously.

2. Franklin decides to move to New York.

3. He decides that he must move secretly rather than let his family know.

4. He decides to travel to Philadelphia rather than stay in New York.

5. He insists on paying the owner of the boat he rode in from Burlington to Philadelphia.

6. Franklin decides that he will set up a special method to inspect his own progress toward moral perfection.

from *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin*

Interacting with Text Analyzing Setting

The **setting** of a literary work is the time and place in which the events in the literary work occur.

EXERCISE A. Read the following passage from *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin*.

However, walking in the evening by the side of the river, a boat came by, which I found was going toward Philadelphia with several people in her. They took me in, and as there was no wind we rowed all the way; and about midnight, not having yet seen the city, some of the company were confident we

must have passed it and would row no further; the others knew not where we were, so we put toward the shore, got into a creek, landed near an old fence, with the rails of which we made a fire, the night being cold, in October, and there we remained till daylight.

EXERCISE B. Read and answer the following questions. For each question, find the text in the passage that will help you answer it. Follow the directions with each question for marking the text.

1. What is the specific time in which the events in this passage take place? Underline the text that gives information about the specific time. Identify the time in which these events occur, according to the text you have underlined.

2. What is the specific place described in the passage? Double-underline the text that describes the specific place. Then identify the place, using the lines provided.

3. What details in the setting appeal to the sense of touch? Circle the text that describes details that appeal to the sense of touch and answer on the line provided.

4. In this passage, what is the mood or atmosphere created by the setting? Circle the letter that identifies the correct answer.

- a. windy, cold, and hopeless
- b. frightening, destructive, and desperate
- c. dark, chilly, yet friendly

Critical Thinking and Reading Worksheet

Making Inferences About the Author

The writing in an autobiography is colored by the author's viewpoint. By carefully examining the text, we can make inferences about the author's personality and beliefs. For example, Franklin says that his brother has "ingenious friends" who write for the *New England Courant*; from the fact that Franklin submits writings himself, even anonymously, we can infer that he believes himself, though "still a boy," to be a good enough writer to compare with them.

Write the letter of the valid inference that can be drawn from each passage on the line at the right.

1. "I kept my secret [the anonymous writings he submitted to his brother's papers] till my small fund of sense for such performances was pretty well exhausted, and then I discovered [revealed] it." 1. _____
 - a. Franklin has run out of ways to conceal his identity.
 - b. Franklin wants the praise that is being given to this author.
 - c. Franklin is irritated that no one has realized who the author really is.
2. "[Dr. Brown] entered into conversation with me while I took some refreshment, and finding I had read a little, became very sociable and friendly. Our acquaintance continued as long as he lived." 2. _____
 - a. Franklin is already well-read enough to interest an educated man.
 - b. Dr. Brown is flattered by Franklin's eagerness to learn from him.
 - c. Franklin's interest in science is born the day he meets Dr. Brown.
3. "*Frugality and Industry* freeing me from my remaining debt and producing affluence and independence, would make more easy the practice of *Sincerity and Justice*, etc., etc." 3. _____
 - a. Franklin believes only wealthy people can be sincere and just.
 - b. Franklin believes financial independence is a desirable goal.
 - c. Franklin does not believe he can afford to be sincere and just until he is out of debt.
4. "... and to the joint influence of the whole mass of the virtues, even in the imperfect state he [Franklin] was able to acquire them, [Franklin attributes] all that evenness of temper, and that cheerfulness in conversation, which makes his company still sought for, and agreeable even to his younger acquaintance." 4. _____
 - a. Franklin is humbly aware that he is not perfect.
 - b. Franklin believes cheerful conversation and popularity are the most important things in life.
 - c. Franklin believes he has an appealing personality.

Critical Thinking and Reading Worksheet

Understanding Style

Benjamin Franklin believed that clarity and brevity are two of the most important characteristics of good writing. The five passages are far from clear and brief. Read each passage and decide which of Franklin's aphorisms expresses the same idea. Write the appropriate aphorism on the line below the passage.

1. Some people expect that the best is bound to happen and that problems will just go away. Such people do little or nothing to make the good happen or to solve their problems. Usually, however, their expectations are not met, and they end up without anything good or with even worse problems.

2. It requires the work of many people to construct a large, complicated object. Once completed, such an object seems very powerful. Yet even a minor flaw can ruin the object.

3. When farmers gather their crops, they are careful to cull out those that are spoiled or marred because when the crops are stored, these flaws could spread to the healthy specimens with which they come into contact.

4. It is wise to cultivate the friendship of those who live near you—you never know when you may have to help them or they may be able to help you. On the other hand, you don't want to get too close to them or they may be forever interfering in your life.

5. We human beings are frail; we can suffer all kinds of accidents that will leave us bruised and broken. But bruises go away and bones heal. On the other hand, if we accidentally say the wrong things, we can end up in a great deal of trouble. Others may never forgive us, we may lose friends or gain enemies, we may be thought foolish, etc.

FROM

Poor Richard's Almanack

Poor Richard, 1733.

A N

Almanack

For the Year of Chriff

I 7 3 3,

Being the First after LEAP YEAR:

And makes since the Creation

By the Account of the Eastern Greeks	Years
By the Latin Church, when O ent. 7	7241
By the Computation of W. W.	6932
By the Roman Chronology	5742
By the Jewish Rabbies	5682
	5494

Wherein is contained

The Lunations, Eclipses, Judgment of the Weather, Spring Tides, Planets Motions & mutual Aspects, Sun and Moon's Rising and Setting, Length of Days, Time of High Water, Tides, Courts, and observable Days.

Fitted to the Latitude of Forty Degrees, and a Meridian of Five Hours West from London, but may without sensible Error, serve all the adjacent Places, even from Newfoundland to South-Carolina.

By RICHARD SAUNDERS, Philom.

PHILADELPHIA:

Printed and sold by B. FRANKLIN, at the New Printing-Office near the Market.

Hunger is the best pickle.
Keep thy shop, and thy shop will keep thee.
Love your neighbor; yet don't pull down your hedge.

A slip of the foot you may soon recover, but a slip of the tongue you may never get over.

Early to bed and early to rise, makes a man healthy, wealthy, and wise.

God helps them that help themselves.

Don't throw stones at your neighbors', if your own windows are glass.

He that scatters thorns, let him not go bare-foot.

Three may keep a secret if two of them are dead.

Tart words make no friends; a spoonful of honey will catch more flies than a gallon of vinegar.

Fish and visitors smell in three days.

If you would know the value of money, try to borrow some.

A small leak will sink a great ship.

He that lieth down with dogs, shall rise up with fleas.

Now that I have a sheep and cow everybody bids me good morrow.

Drive thy business; let it not drive thee.

Dost thou love life? Then do not squander time; for that's the stuff life is made of.

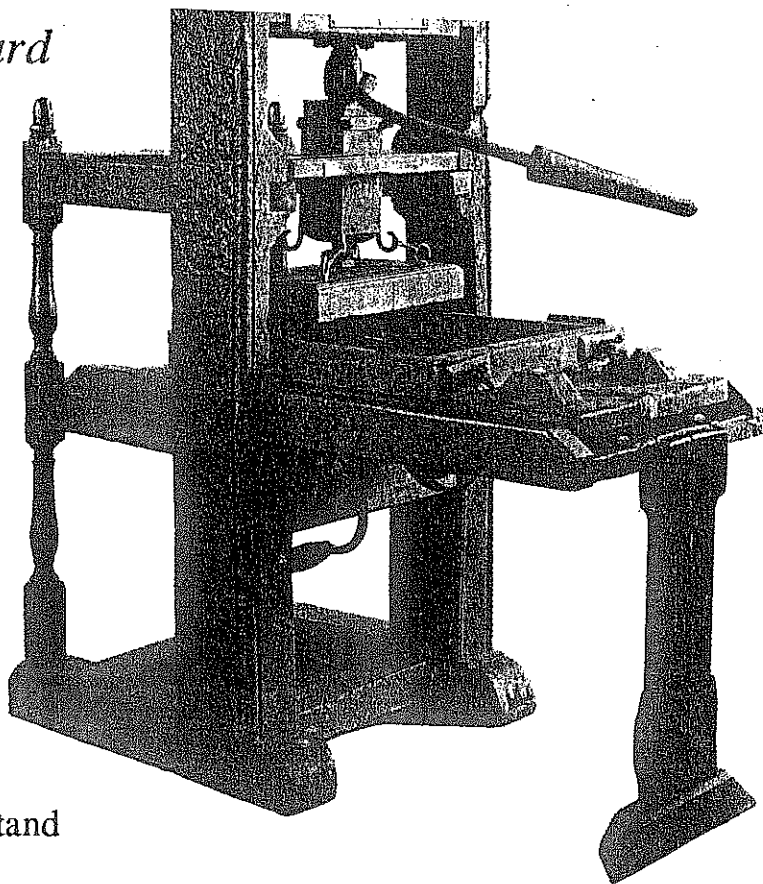
Title page of first edition of *Poor Richard's Almanack*.

13. Be slow in choosing a friend, slower in changing.
14. Love your neighbor; yet don't pull down your hedge.
15. They that won't be *counseled* can't be helped.
16. Three may keep a secret if two of them are dead.
17. Fish and visitors smell in three days.
18. The rotten apple spoils his companions.
19. Early to bed and early to rise, makes a man healthy, wealthy, and wise.
20. An open foe may prove a curse; but a pretended friend is worse.

FROM THE *Sayings of Poor Richard*

One today is worth two tomorrows.

2. He that is of the opinion that money will do everything may well be suspected of doing everything for money.
3. A truly great man will neither trample on a worm nor sneak to an emperor.
4. If you would know the value of money, go and try to borrow some; he that goes a-borrowing goes a-sorrowing.
5. The eye of a master will do more work than both his hands.
6. 'Tis hard for an empty bag to stand upright.
7. If a man could have half his wishes, he would double his troubles.
8. If a man empties his purse into his head, no man can take it away from him. An *investment* in knowledge always pays the best interest.
9. People who are wrapped up in themselves make small packages.
10. Fools make feasts, and wise men eat them.
11. He that lives on hope will die fasting.
12. Glass, china, and reputation are easily cracked and never well mended.



investment (in VEST munt) an outlay, usually of money, for income or profit

from POOR [E] RICHARD'S ALMANACK

Benjamin Franklin ~

Who judges best of a man, his enemies or himself?

If you would keep your secret from an enemy,
tell it not to a friend.

[E] The worst wheel of the cart makes the most noise.

He that cannot obey, cannot command.

No gains without pains.

'Tis easier to prevent bad habits than to break them.

A rolling stone gathers no moss.

Today is yesterday's pupil.

Most fools think they are only ignorant.¹

An empty bag cannot stand upright.

1. *Ignorant* means "uneducated" or "uninformed."

Experience keeps a dear² school, yet fools will learn
in no other.

What signifies³ your patience, if you can't find it
when you want it.

He that lies down with dogs, shall rise up with fleas.

Well done is better than well said.

What you would seem to be, be really.

Honesty is the best policy.

Dost thou love life? Then do not squander time;
for that's the stuff life is made of.

G Keep thy shop, and thy shop will keep thee.

Beware of little expenses,
a small leak will sink a great ship.

A penny saved is a penny earned.

Don't count your chickens before they are hatched.

Buy what thou hast no need of;
and e'er long thou shalt sell thy necessities.

Not to oversee workmen, is to leave them your purse open.

Fish and visitors smell in three days.

Quarrels never could last long,
if on one side only lay the wrong.

Love thy neighbor; yet don't pull down your hedge.

2. Here, *dear* means "expensive."

3. *Signifies* means "has importance or meaning."



LITERARY ELEMENTS TRANSPARENCY 12

FOR USE WITH LITERARY ELEMENTS: APHORISMS (PAGE 136)

Aphorisms are short, memorable statements that convey a general truth or an observation about life.

Example: No gains without pains.

In the left-hand boxes are aphorisms from the excerpt from *Poor Richard's Almanack*. Explain the meaning of these aphorisms in the right-hand boxes.

1. Fish and
visitors smell
in three days.



2. Most fools
think they are
only ignorant.



3. Little strokes
fell great
oaks.



Using the excerpt from *Of Plymouth Plantation* on page 69, give some examples of aphorisms William Bradford might have created.

